

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 remain pending. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended. Support for these amendments may be found for example in FIGS. 6 and 7, and the corresponding descriptions of the embodiments of FIGS. 6 and 7, in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Tavor (US 2001/0032077) in view of Tell (US 2004/0054614). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the claims as amended.

The claimed subject matter is directed to a product information contrast system and comprises a number of elements in combination. In representative claim 1 as amended, for example, the claimed combination includes a product information management unit, a threshold setting unit, a judgment unit and a display control unit. The product information management unit manages a plurality of items of product information of products including a criterion product. The threshold setting unit stores a threshold value provided to determine whether specifications of product information items of the criterion product indicate any of a newly set property, an omitted property and an out-of-range property when compared with specifications of product information items of other products. The judgment unit determines whether a product property indicated by the specifications in the product information items of the criterion product is different from a corresponding product property indicated by specifications in the product information items of at least one of the other products managed by the product information management unit, based on the threshold value received from the threshold setting unit. The display control unit generates a visually recognizable alarm display indication of the newly set property, the omitted property, or the out-of-range property in the specifications of the product information items of the criterion product based on results of the determination of the judgment unit.

For example, in one embodiment a criterion product may include a toner product that is under development, and the associated product property may include a particle-size distribution, fine-particle property, electrical property, etc. of the toner product. The comparison of the product property of the criterion toner product with a corresponding product property of another toner

product can indicate differences between specifications of the toner products, which can prove very useful to the development of the criterion toner product.

This combination of claim elements, in which a determination is made as to whether a product property indicated by specifications in product information items of a criterion product is different from a corresponding product property indicated by specifications in product information items of at least one other product based on a threshold value, is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, viewed alone or in combination.

In contrast to the cited prior art, embodiments of the claimed product information contrast system enable visual recognition of differences in the specifications between other products and a product under development having product information items serving as the criteria of contrast. The differences can be reflected in the specifications of the product under development, and the efficiency of development of the product can be increased while preventing the occurrence of quality problems.

Further, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's conclusion that the newly set, omitted, and out-of-range property determinations recited in the claims comprise non-functional descriptive material. Because the function of a property being newly set, omitted or out-of-range results from the determination process of the judgment unit as claimed, these property determinations cannot be considered non-functional descriptive material.


In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection

with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692005100.

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Respectfully submitted,

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